

FORD AND MANTLE WORRY MANAGER

Yanks, Preparing for First Exhibition Saturday, Also Troubled by Weather

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ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., March 6 — As the Yankees swung into the final week of preliminary training today for the exhibition campaign starting Saturday, Manager Casey Stengel still found himself a long way from solving his many problems.

Nor has his lot been made easier by certain developments beyond his control. There has been the delay of getting the full squad working because of tardy contract-signers. Also, Mickey Mantle and Tony Kubek are still holding out. Then there has been the weather, which for the third straight day has been frosty.

Perhaps this could be as good a time as any for a run-down on the various question marks that must be erased if the Yanks are to regain the heights from which they toppled last year. There are eight in all.

Perhaps the most important concerns Bob Turley. If Bullet Bob can regain his 1958 form, it undeniably would give a tremendous lift to the Yankee pitching.

Turley Training Hard

But this problem likely won't be answered for some time, even though the big right-hander is training with determination. When a pitcher drops from twenty-one victories to eight, as Turley did last season with apparently no physical ailments, it can leave a manager wondering.

Another question mark is Bill Skowron, the brittle first baseman, who, as a football star at Purdue, never knew what it was to get hurt. Only the fellows who bounced off him went into the pits for repairs.

But in the milder game of baseball, it seems he can't go through a season without damaging himself. At the moment the Moose looks fully recovered from his mishaps of last year, which included a fractured wrist. But this case still remains in the laps of the gods.

In the same category is Whitey Ford. The compact lefty is still a fine pitcher. But it cannot be overlooked that in each of the last three seasons there have been periods of a month or more in which he has been sidelined with arm miseries.

Mantle Still Has Potential

Then there is Mantle. At 28, he still has the potential. But the indisputable fact remains that ever since his big year in 1956 he has been receding steadily. Last year his batting average faded to .283.

In left field there is another problem. If Roger Maris, the fine young player acquired from the Athletics, can take over that difficult spot in the Yankee Stadium, all will be well.

Right field would then be the normal spot for the hard-hitting though less talented Hector Lopez. But if Maris has to be returned to right, a position he prefers, Stengel again would have trouble. He could partially solve this by using Tony Kubek in left, but that would leave Lopez at a loose end and put in the outfield a player who has yet to hit more than six home runs in a season.

Carey Must Do It Alone

The next big if is Andy Carey, who was out nearly all of last season because of illness. He is scheduled to be the regular third baseman. In the past he two-platooned at third with Jerry Lumpe. But Lumpe is with Kansas City now, so Andy must do it alone.

The young pitchers present a problem, too. Ralph Terry and Bill Short, along with Jim Coates, are being counted on heavily as starting pitchers. Terry and Short are still in service and not expected out until late this month. It will be touch and go to have them ready by opening day.

Last, but not least, of the problems is Ryne Duren, for more than half of the 1959 season a tremendous relief hurler. But he tailed off near the end, then wound up with a fractured wrist.